

Stacy Dozier Taturewicz New London

Hello, I was asked to write this to tell my story. Please keep in mind this is the short version. My name is Stacy. Annastacia 12yrs., Patience 10yrs., and Marissa 8yrs. are my three daughters. I'm a single mother and finally happy. I wasn't Happy just a few years ago.

I left a marriage of 15yrs. because the man I loved was drinking almost everyday. He mentally abused me and it started to turn to physical abuse.

Within minutes my whole life changed. I was sleeping with my daughters when he broke the door down and grabbed me out of the bed only to throw me across the room. His brother returned with him and he heard the commotion. He came in and grabbed him off of me pulling him into the other room.

When they left the room I looked up to see my girls looking at me. Their precious eyes witnessed something that no child should have to.

When I got an apartment it all seemed fine. I was recieving state and food stamps. The cash covered the rent. Their aunt babysat so I could work part time.

After about 2 weeks everything tumbled down hill. Lost a babysitter, their father still drinking, my mother passed away, and I lost my job. From the stress my depression kicked into overdrive. I had to take extra meds and that didn't seem to help.

The rent didn't get paid due to my daughters passing a cold to each other. As I said the state exactly covered the rent, so with me having to buy meds so my daughters would feel better the rent was short. The next month I was even more behind. Eviction was right around the corner.

I started to call shelters and they were all full due to the cold weather. My mind kept asking, "Why, I don't drink or do drugs, he was hurting me, why are we suffering?"

I thought why put them through this. I heard that he had stopped drinking and he was living with a very nice woman and things were going good for him. So I did the most painful thing a loving mother could do, I asked him to take care of them until I get back on my feet.

Here I am mentally exhausted constantly crying for my daughters. Hungry, no money and living in my car in the dead of winter. Do you know how belittling it is to ask a stranger for money. That was one of my daily things on my "to do" list. Except I had to ask alot more than just one person. I remember eating instant state potatoes with water and nothing else. The thought of it turns my stomach. When there was no gas in the car and no one wanting to help, I couldn't drive to a soup kitchen.

I would park by a business with a rest room. That way I had the facilities and hot water for my potatoes.

I tried so hard to get a job but with out a permanent adress no one wants to hire you.

I finally got into a shelter and still no permanent adress, no permanent job.

I stayed at all my friends houses for acouple days here and there. Shelters and living in my car, begging and just trying to survive filled a year in my life.

I found out about a program for single mothers with children. I wanted that right away. An apartment, my daughters back, meetings to help me learn to strive on our own and a chance at life again as a family.

I got my girls back and we got a space in the norwich shelter. I did all the requiements for the program. In two months we got our apartment in the building and our move in date.

The program was what I needed and the staff, especially one, my J., was beautiful and were blessings in our lives. I did what they asked went to my trainings and pushed on. I wanted to see the top of the hill, I slept at the bottom for too long!

Then one day it happened, our light at the end. I sit here crying thinking about the day that I recieved my voucher from the, "Next Step Program". We were so happy to be able to, with help, afford an apartment. I'm starting my life with my girls all over again. This time I'm stronger and much wiser.

Now being in the Next Step Program for almost a year I can say I feel in control, independant and most of all, I feel like a good mother.

My rent is paid every month. The rest of my money is budgeted. My advocate from the program comes to see me and helps if anything is needed. I love this program! I wasn't thrown out into the world with three daughters instead they placed us gently into our lives again.

My advocate is sweet, intelligent and down to earth. She is a blessing in our lives and I'm happy we have her.

This program has permanentaly changed my life. I'm going to college for human services because now I want to help others.

My family would still be suffering if it wasn't for Next Step! My girls are so happy. We are together and getting stronger everyday.

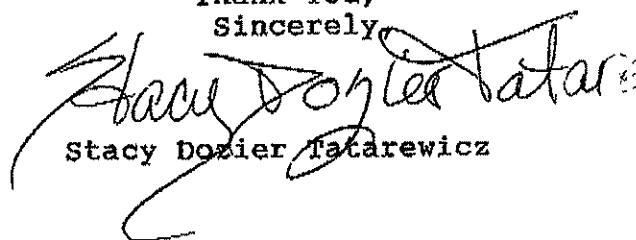
To conclude, Marissa my 8yr old came home and told me she made something. Her teacher asked her students to draw a picture and write under it why they love their mothers. I still cry everytime I read it. This is what it looked like:

MOM
(a picture of a star with
a happy face)

I love you because your strong
and you never give up

If we didn't have this program I wouldn't be this strong.

Thank You,
Sincerely,


Stacy Dozier Tatarowicz